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CONTENTS

- **Some Misconceptions about God**
  —Hazrat Amir ul-Momineen
- **The Nature & Importance of Revelation**
  —The Promised Messiah
- **A Misunderstanding Removed—II**
  —The Promised Messiah
- **Some Interesting Cases of Hermaphroditism**
- **The Value of Philosophic Knowledge — A Dialogue**
  —Mr. Abdus Salam, B.A
- **The Historical Role of Islam**
  —M. N. Ro

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

SOME POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD

(By Hazrat Amir-ul-Momineen)

AN IMPORTANT question concerning God which it is the duty of a religion to answer is, why cannot we see God, if He exists? It is easy to assert that God exists, but the difficulty is to prove the various attributes of God. The Holy Quran recognises this responsibility and furnishes proofs of the various Divine attributes. For instance concerning the above-mentioned question it says: "God cannot be seen with the physical eyes but He reveals Himself to the eyes of man. He is too subtle to be seen by the eye of man, but He is aware of everything!" (VI. 103). What a brief but comprehensive explanation! Subtle things cannot be seen by man, for instance, air, electricity, ether, etc. How then can he see God, Who is more subtle than the subtlest thing and is not made of any material, however subtle, but is Himself the creator of all things? On the other hand God knows that man is restlessly seeking His union and is impatient for His meeting. He, therefore, Himself comes to man and reveals Himself to his eyes, that is to say, manifests Himself through His Powers and Attributes and thus man is enabled to see Him with the eyes of reason.

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Concerning the proof of the existence of God, the Holy Quran says: "Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom and Who has power over all things, Who has created Life and Death to ascertain which of you is best in deeds. (That is to say, He has created Life for actions and Death for compensation, for perfect compensation could not be awarded in this life, lest Faith should become a thing of no value). He is the Mighty, the Forgiving. He has created the seven heights, each supporting the other. You will find no incongruity in *Rahman's* creation. Then look and see whether you can discover any defect, and look again and again and your look will return to you unsuccessful and fatigued." (LXVII, 1—4).

In other words, if one considers the entire universe, one will find that every need has been met, and the most appropriate materials for the development of every faculty and capacity have been provided. Some of the needs of the meanest worm that crawls on the earth, are being provided for by means of a planet which is travelling billions of miles away from the earth. Let the contemplation of this circle of want and satisfaction teach us that this universe has a Creator, Who has not omitted to foresee our smallest want and has provided the means of satisfaction of every yearning and every true desire.

Another question which is sometimes asked is, if God is a Beneficent Creator, why has He created things like wild and savage animals, worms and reptiles, pains, troubles, ailments, and pestilences, etc. Islam offers an explanation of this also. For instance, the Holy Quran says: "All praise is due to God Who has created the Heavens and the Earth and has made the Light and Darkness, and yet those who deny the Truth associate others with Him," (VI. 2). That is to say, all things that are troublesome and are called the children of Darkness, for instance, reptiles, wild beasts, poisons, plagues, etc., are also the creation of God, and their creation does not offend against the attribute of Mercy but on the contrary proves the Mercy of God. If

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their true nature is considered, they add to the praise and glory of God and do not in any way detract from it, yet those who are ignorant of the nature of these things, regard their creation as derogatory to God and associate others with Him, believing that these things must have been created by some other being. See how beautifully Islam has unveiled the truth and has explained the object of creating those things which appear at first sight to be harmful. It teaches that they have all been created for a useful purpose and that man ought to praise God for their creation. Considered in this light the whole position is reversed. Arsenic, Strychnia, and Morphia are deadly poisons, yet how frequently are they used to relieve human distress and to combat disease. Do more men die of these poisons, or are more men saved through them? Millions of men are every year saved from the clutches of death by the use of these poisons. How can it then be said that these things are harmful or even useless? The same is the case with snakes, scorpions and other reptiles. Much attention has not yet been devoted to these creatures, but further research is bound to disclose the fact that their existence is of very great value from the medicinal point of view. Besides, as appears from the Holy Quran the creation of these insects, reptiles, etc., was a preliminary to the creation of man, and they had a large share in the purification of the atmosphere of the earth. These insects and animals were in fact the first links in the creation of man, not, however, in the sense in which evolution is generally understood in these days, but as indicating and representing the different stages of development through which the earth has passed.

Again He says: "One of His bounties is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of all living things between them, and He can do away with them when He pleases, and whatever befalls you is the consequence of your own actions; and God suppresses many evil consequences of your errors." (XLII, 29, 30.) In other words God has created the Sun, the Moon and the stars and the heavens and the earth and all that is

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between them to serve man, but if he fails to take advantage of them or misuses any of them and thus suffers loss or injury, it is his own fault. In many cases God averts the evil consequences of man's errors, and the evils suffered by him are not, therefore, due to God's action but to man's contravention of the laws of Nature which had been devised for his benefit. Disease is also due to the action of the active (فاعلی) and the impressible (انفعالی) faculties with which man has been endowed. The whole of man's progress is due to the action and re-action of these faculties and if these faculties did not exist man would not be what he is. Under a general law of Nature man influences all things around him and is in his turn influenced by all of them, and whenever in this process of influencing or being influenced he contravenes the laws of nature he exposes himself to the attack of a disease or becomes liable to some other ill or inconvenience. God has not, therefore, created disease, but has created the Law of Nature which is indispensable to man's progress, and disease is the result of an infringement of this law. As this Law is in itself the result of the beneficence of God, the mere fact that disease may result from the ignorance or infringement of it does not in any way detract from the perfection of God's Beneficence.

And as with disease, so with sin, which again has no independent existence. An infringement of a natural or spiritual law is termed a sin, and the existence of sin therefore, does not offend against the Beneficence or Sanctity of God. The names which have been used in the Holy Quran to signify sin, indicate either excess or default, none of them being an underived noun, which shows that according to the Holy Quran sin has no independent existence, and signifies merely the absence of righteousness. Excess and default are the direct result of man's action or omission, his failure to use God's bounties or his attempt to infringe the rights of others.

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No other religious book presents God in this light, and it is the Holy Quran alone which asserts and explains that the existence of these apparently harmful and injurious things does not detract from the perfect attributes of God. The Holy Quran does not merely enumerate the attributes of God; it explains and illustrates them in such detail that all doubts and misgivings vanish and a revelation of their beauty enchants the eye, compels admiration and fills the heart with the longing to love and obey. A mere enumeration of Divine attributes, however, is of no great merit.

Again, it is sometimes objected that it is incompatible with God's Mercy that children should suffer from diseases and disorders which they have in no way earned or brought upon themselves.

The answer to this objection is contained in the above explanation, that is to say, God has made a law that all things are influenced by their surroundings, and this law is wholly beneficent. If this had not been so, man could neither have been influenced by external things nor could he have made any progress. Under the operation of this law children are influenced, both for good and for evil, by their parents. They get health from them and also diseases. If they could not have inherited disease they would equally have been prevented from inheriting the powers and capacities of their parents, and man would have been born a mere image of stone, impervious both to good and to evil influences, and the object underlying the creation of man would have failed and his existence would have been worse than that of animals.

The next question is, whether there is any compensation for the loss and suffering caused by inherited diseases and disabilities. The answer given to this question by Islam is, that in measuring the spiritual progress of each man allowance will be made for every disability under which he had suffered and which had not been incurred by some fault of his own. For instance, the Holy Quran says: "On the day of

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the final Retribution causes which had impeded the spiritual progress of a man and over which he had no control will be taken into consideration." (VII, 7.) At another place it says: "Those of the faithful who do not strive in the path of God cannot be put on the same level with those who strive, except those whose inability is due to some natural deficiency. God will keep their disability in view." (IV, 95).

The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) says:—

ما يزال البلاء بالمومن والمومنة فى نفسه و ولده و ما لـــه حتى يلقى الله تعالى و ما عليه خطيئة (ترمذى)

i.e. "No believing men or women experience any suffering concerning their bodies or their children or property, but that their sins are thereby reduced and they are so purified by the suffering that by the time they appear before God, their sins have been entirely washed away." (Tirmidhi). Although this tradition refers particularly to the believers, the principle laid down by the Holy Quran is of universal application, and the believers are mentioned in the tradition because this explanation was given in answer to their question.

What has been described above is an apt illustration of the different teachings of religions concerning the attributes of God. Islam defines the attribute of beneficence in one way and other religions define it in quite another way. Some of them have had to import the doctrine of transmigration of souls in order to support the Beneficence of God. But even a brief consideration would show that the explanation given by Islam is perfectly reasonable and in accord with the laws of Nature, whereas the doctrine of transmigration of souls is based on mere suppositions.

The working of the Divine attributes of Justice and Mercy also requires attention. All religions describe God both as Just and Merciful, but there is a vast difference between their respective explanations of

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the working of these attributes. Islam says that there is no conflict between these two attributes and that both of them can and do operate simultaneously. Mercy is not opposed to Justice but is above it. The Holy Quran says :—" Whoever does a good deed will have a tenfold reward, and whoever does an evil thing, will be recompensed only in proportion thereto, and they will not be unjustly dealt with." (VI, 160.) This shows that according to Islam it is not unjust to reward a person in excess of his deserts, but that it is unjust to inflict on a man a punishment greater than he deserves.

Surely, injustice means to reward a man in a measure less than that he has earned, or to punish a man in a measure larger than that he deserves, or to give to one man that which is due to another, and God never does any of these things. All that he does is that He forgives a repentant creature who having seen the error of his ways gives up his evil course of life and presents himself before the Throne of Divine Mercy supplicating for forgiveness with a beating heart, trembling lips, streaming eyes, a head bowed with shame, and a mind bursting with tumultuous thoughts, and a determination to lead a pure and unsullied life in the future. Such a person God enables to start on a new course in life. He is like the father whose son goes astray and comes home humbled and repentant after a long time, unable to lift his eyes to his father, who, overcome by natural affection, draws him to his breast, and does not reject him, but on the contrary proclaims his joy at the return of his son. Would this be an occasion for his other sons who had remained at home and served him, to complain of the injustice of their father? By God, no, and a thousand times no!

No doubt punishment is one of the instruments of reform, but the tortures of Hell are not a greater punishment than true remorse. What the fire of Hell can effect in the course of a hundred thousand years,

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true remorse can effect in the course of a few minutes. When a man appears before God truly repentant and with a determination to lead a better life in the future, the Merciful God must take pity on him. Shall the Merciful and Forgiving Lord turn away from and reject a servant of His who throws himself down at the door of His Mercy, all remorse for the past and hope for the future? Surely, No!

Lastly, I shall refer to the attribute which is better known than any other attribute of God, but concerning which there is greater disagreement among the different religions than in the case of any other attribute, that is, the attribute of Unity. There is not a single religion in existence which teaches a plurality of gods: as a matter of principle all of them proclaim the Unity of God. Nay, the followers of one religion charge the followers of another religion with non-belief in a perfect Unity. I have seen it stated in some books written by Europeans that the Muslims are polytheists, and I am told that many people in Europe and America who are ignorant of Islamic literature, imagine that the Muslims worship the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God). This indicates the general feeling that the doctrine of a plurality of gods is impossible of acceptance in this age. But notwithstanding the agreement of all religions in their professed belief in the Unity of God, everyone of them differs from the others in its interpretation of it, and many of them use the expression only as a cloak to hide their polytheistic beliefs. But Islam is wholly free from polytheistic conceptions and doctrines and has completely uprooted all beliefs and practices which even remotely suggest such ideas. It has defined and explained the doctrine of associating aught with God so exhaustively that nobody is left in any doubt concerning it.

The Holy Quran classifies *Shirk* (or association of other gods with God) into four kinds. *First*, a belief in a plurality of gods. *Secondly*, a belief that any other being shares, in a greater or lesser degree, in God's attributes, irrespective of the fact whether such

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being is or is not called a deity. For instance, a belief that a particular person can create living things or can bring the dead to life amounts to *shirk*, although the person to whom such attributes are ascribed be a human being. For here, there is a difference only in name, and the essence of Divinity has been ascribed to another. *Thirdly*, to look upon a being other than God as worthy of worship although that being is not considered a god, nor is believed to share in the attributes of God, as, for instance, parents were worshipped in some tribes in ancient days. *Fourthly*, to regard a human being as infallible. For instance, a belief that a particular saint or holy person is wholly free from the natural weaknesses of man and must therefore, be implicitly obeyed in every instance, however objectionable his orders may be, and practically to prefer his commands to those of God, although as a matter of belief that person is not regarded as God.

The Holy Quran indicates these four kinds of *shirk* in the following verse:— "O, people of the Book, let us agree in this one matter, which both of us accept, that we worship none but Allah, Who has no partner, and that we associate with Him none in His attributes and that we prefer to Him nobody from among His servants. If they refuse, Say, bear witness ye people that we submit ourselves to God in this manner." (III, 64.)

What a complete refutation of all kinds of *shirk* is contained in this one little verse! In view of what is laid down in this verse when a Muslim says he believes in one God, he means that he worships none but God, that he does not ascribe to any other being any of the attributes of God, that he considers Him free from all earthly relationships, that he believes that God is above assuming human form, that he believes that God is not subject to death or hunger or thirst, that he bows to none except God, that his hopes are centred in no other being, that he addresses his prayers to none but Him, and that although he venerates the prophets of God, he does not regard them as anything more than human. This is what Islam teaches him and to which he holds throughout his life.

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THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF REVELATION*

Some Questions Answered

Q. 1. How can it be right to believe that God sends down His word from Heaven? The laws of nature do not testify to this, nor do we ever hear a voice coming down from heaven.

A. The verity, which is proved by incontrovertible facts and which has been personally experienced by numberless men of wisdom and knowledge and the proof of which can be furnished to every seeker after truth in every age, can suffer no harm if it is denied by one who is devoid of spiritual insight, or if the imperfect reasoning or defective knowledge of one whose mind is destitute of enlightenment fails to testify it, nor can it be excluded from the laws of nature by the non-sensical talk of such men. Take for instance, the case of a magnet. If any body, who is unaware of the properties of a magnet and has never seen one, should declare that the magnet is only a stone and that so far as he is aware such attraction is not to be found in any stone and that therefore the assertion that the magnet possesses a power of attraction is utterly wrong, for it is against the laws of nature. Will such a foolish talk on his part render the undoubted property of the magnet doubtful and uncertain? Certainly not. If his declaration will show any thing, it will only show that he is a great fool who holds his own ignorance of a thing to be a proof of its non-existence, and rejects the evidence of thousands of men who have had personal experience of it. How can the laws of nature be subject to the condition that every individual should generally be able to test them personally? All men have not been made equal in respect of their physical or mental powers. For instance, some are gifted with keen eyesight, others are weak-sighted, and some are

* Translated from the *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, one of the writings of the Promised Messiah (peace be with him).

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even blind. When the weak-sighted find that the sharp-sighted have discerned a fine object, say the crescent, from a long distance they do not deny it, for they know that by doing so, they will betray their own weakness and disgrace themselves in the eyes of others. As for the blind, the poor fellows cannot say a word in such matters. Similarly when such persons as are deprived of the faculty of smell, hear others speak of the fragrance or bad smell of certain objects, they believe them and entertain no doubt as to their truthfulness. They know full well that so many people cannot utter a lie and that they are surely truthful and that without doubt they themselves have been deprived of the faculty of smell, hence their inability to perceive the odour of these objects of smell. The same difference is to be found with regard to the internal faculties. Some stand at the bottom and are wrapped up in the veils of self, while there have been others from times immemorial whose souls were so exalted and pure that they became recipients of divine revelation; and if those wrapped up in the veils of self deny the characteristics of these exalted personages, their case will be like that of the blind or the weak-sighted who deny the existence of the objects seen by the keen-sighted, or like that of a man who is born without the power of smell and who denies the odours perceived by one who possesses the faculty of smelling, and just as there are means to satisfy one who denies the existence of things temporal, similarly there are ways and means to convince those who deny spiritual verities. For instance, if the man who is born without the faculty of smelling insists on denying the very existence of smell and declares all those who possess this faculty to be either liars or superstitious, he can be made to see his error in the following way. Let him apply scent to certain objects—say pieces of cloth—and leave others unscented and thus test those who possess the faculty. By repeated experiments on this line, he will assure himself that the faculty of smell does exist and that actually there are men who can distinguish between a scented and an unscented object.

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Similarly, by repeated experiments a seeker after truth can satisfy himself as to the existence of *revelation* for to the recipient of revelation are revealed deep secrets which cannot be disclosed by mere reason, and the revealed book comprises marvels which are not to be found in other books; and by this means a seeker after truth can see that divine revelation is an established reality. If he has a pure soul, he can by following the true path personally receive revelation according to his own spiritual capacity like the holy ones of God; and thus by his own personal experience he will testify to the truth of the revelation that is sent down to the messengers of God. To any one who shows his willingness to accept Islam with a sincere and devoted heart if the truth is made clear to him, I undertake to demonstrate the truth of revelation by means of the fresh word of God which has been vouchsafed to me and which I continually receive from Heaven. If any body be in doubt as to my words, let him turn to me with a sincere heart, and Allah is able to accomplish what I say and He is my helper in every matter.

Q. 2. Does not *revelation* simply mean the thoughts which arise in the minds of the wise when they give themselves up to meditation and deliberation?

A. To think that *revelation* is no other than the subtle points of wisdom that occur to the mind of man when he ponders over certain questions is a *whim* which has its roots in ignorance and spiritual blindness. If mere human thoughts had constituted divine revelation, man would have been able to know the hidden secrets of the future by means of reflection and contemplation. But it is evident that man cannot tell the future by means of deliberation and meditation no matter how wise he may be, nor can he show any divine power, nor does his writing evince any mark of the peculiar power of God. However much he may meditate, he cannot discover the deep secrets which are beyond the scope of his reason, his mind and his senses. Nor can his words be so exalted as to defy the powers of man. Hence there are sufficient reasons for every sensible

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man to believe that the good or evil thoughts which are the outcome of one's meditation and contemplation cannot be the word of God. If man's own thoughts had been divine inspiration, all the doors of the Unseen would have been thrown open to him, and he would have been able to say things which depend only on the power of God, for both in the work and the word of God there must be a manifestation of divine power.

If any one asks whence and from whom come the good and evil plans and the subtle methods for carrying out noble or ignoble designs and various sorts of stratagems and devices which occur to one's mind on contemplation, and how it is that when one begins to think over a matter, one suddenly hits upon a new idea, the answer to this question in that all these ideas belong to the category of *Khalqullah* (the creation of God), and not *Amrullah* (the bidding of God). There is a fine distinction between *Khalq* (creation) and *Amr* (bidding). When God creates an object by employing certain means and ascribes it to Himself being the first of all causes, that action of His is called *Khalq* or creation. When He brings a thing into existence without the instrumentality of means, it is called *Amr* or bidding.

The word of God which is revealed by the Almighty belongs to the category of *Amr* or divine bidding and not to that of *Khalq* or divine creation; while the ideas that come into one's mind on contemplation fall under the heading of *Khalq* or divine creation, for in their case divine power works under the veil of means and human faculties.

God has endowed man with various powers and faculties, and has so created him that whenever he makes use of his thinking faculty for any matter be it good or bad, there do occur to him plans suitable for his purpose. Just as the case of the physical faculties and senses it is a law of nature that when a man opens his eyes he does see some objects, and when he turns his ear to listen to some voice he does hear something; similarly when he thinks of some way of success in some

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undertaking, be it good or bad, one or other plan does suggest itself to him. A pious man thinks out good ideas, while a thief devises some clever method for breaking into a house by pondering over the subject. Just as deep and fine thoughts of evil occur to a man when he thinks about evil, similarly when he employs the same faculty for a good purpose good and pious ideas come into his mind. And just as evil ideas cannot be called the word of God, no matter however deep, subtle and fascinating they may be, similarly the self-devised ideas of man which he imagines to be good are not the word of God.

In short, the ideas of wisdom that occur to a man of virtue or the evil devices which suggest themselves to thieves, dacoits, murderers, the profligates, and forgers after deep thinking are merely natural attributes and they are called *Khalqullah* (God's creation) because Allah is the prime cause of all things, and not *Amrullah*. They are the natural properties of man, just as certain vegetables have the property of producing purgation or causing constipation or possess similar other virtues. Just as the All-Wise God has endowed objects with various properties, similarly, he has invested the thinking faculty of man with the virtue that whenever a man seeks help from it in any good or evil matter, it affords him the required help. When a poet desires to compose a satirical poem and wants to turn a man to ridicule, sarcastic verses flow into his mind, but if another poet wants to write a panegyric in praise of the same man, then it is the words of praise that will naturally come into his mind. Hence, such ideas, whether good or bad, cannot be said to represent the special will of God, nor can they be called His work or word. The Holy Word of God is that which far transcends human faculties and is characterised by perfection, power and holiness.

The first condition for the revelation of the word of God is that human faculties should be in a state of abeyance and inaction. There should be no thinking no reflection, but man should be like one dead. All

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means should be cut off, and God, who has a real and actual existence, should send down his word on the heart of some one by His special will.

Just as the light of the sun comes only from heven and not from inside the eye of a man, similarly the light of revelation comes down from God alone and by His will; it does not spring from the heart. When God actually exists and He does see, hear, know and speak, then His word should proceed from Him, and man's own thoughts should not be taken as the word of God. The thoughts that rise in our minds are only those that fall within the range of our nature but how can the boundless knowledge and the unlimited wisdom of God be contained within the scope of the human mind? What blasphemy can be greater than to say that all the treasures of knowledge, wisdom and hidden secrets are contained in our minds and that it is from our minds that they gush forth. This would be tantamount to saying that in reality we ourselves are gods and that there is no other self-existing being, possessed of all the perfect attributes, who may be called God. For if God really exists, and if His boundless knowledge is peculiar to him and cannot be measured by our mind, then how absurd and how wrong would it be to say that the boundless knowledge of God and all the treasures of divine wisdom are contained in our mind, which means that the knowledge of God is not more than what is contained in our own minds. Would this not be a claim to divinity? But is it possible that the mind of a man should be endowed with all the perfections of God? Is it right that an insignificant atom should become the luminous sun? No, never!

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A MISUNDERSTANDING REMOVED*

II

IT should be remembered that I have never hesitated to claim prophethood and apostleship in this sense of the word and it is in this sense that the Promised Messiah has been called a *nabi* (prophet) in the *Sahih Muslim*. If one who proclaims the knowledge of the Unseen from God is not entitled to prophethood, then by what other name would you call him? The contention that the word *Mohaddas* (محدث) can adequately describe the spiritual status of such a person, receives no support or countenance whatever from any dictionary because in no dictionary the Arabic word *tahdis* (تحديث) has been described as the possession and proclamation of the secrets of the Unseen but *nabuwwat* (prophethood) does presuppose such a possession of the secrets of the Unknown. *Nabi* is a word which is common both to the Arabic and Hebrew languages. In Hebrew it is spelt as *nābi* (نابی) and is derived from another word *nābā* (نابا) which means to be endowed by God with the gift of prophecy. To bear or bring a new law is no *sine qua non* of prophethood. It is only a divine gift which causes the secrets of the Unseen to be revealed to a person. So when I have myself witnessed the clear fulfilment of about 150 prophecies, then how can I refuse to call myself a prophet or an apostle of God and when He Himself has bestowed upon me these names, who am I to reject them or how dare I fear anybody in opposition to God? I swear by God Who has raised me and Whose curse falls upon him who fabricates lies about Him, that He has sent me as the Promised Messiah. And my faith in my clear revelations is not

*Being the translation in English of a pamphlet of the Promised Messiah entitled *Ek Ghalati ka Izala*. For continuation see vol. 36, No. 9.

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a whit less firm and invincible than my faith in the verses of the Holy Quran and the truth of the revelation that God has caused to descend on me has become quite manifest by a host of successive signs that He has shown. And I feel not the least hesitation in swearing by God while standing in the sacred precincts of the Ka'ba that that holy revelation which descends on me is the word of the self-same God Who sent down His word to Moses, Jesus and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The earth bore witness to the truth of my claim and so did heaven. Both of them declared and proclaimed that I was God's Vicegerent on earth. But as the prophecies told of yore I was bound to be rejected. So those upon whose hearts there is a covering will not accept me. But I know and I am convinced that God shall help me as He has always helped His Apostles in the past. There is no one who can make a stand against me because God's assistance is not with them. And whenever and wherever I have refused to be called a prophet or an apostle, it is only in the sense that I am not a self-subsisting prophet and am the bearer of no new Law. But I certainly am a prophet in this sense of the word that having been spiritually benefited by my Great and Noble Master and having been able to acquire his name, I have been endowed with the knowledge of the Unseen. But I repeat it again that I have brought or introduced no new Law and I have never refused to lay claim to a prophethood of this kind.

On the other hand God has called me a prophet and an apostle in this sense of the word. So even now I do not refuse to be called a prophet and an apostle in this sense of the word. And the words من نیستم رسول و نیاوردہ ام کتاب (I am not a prophet and I have brought no book) have no connotation other than that I am not a law-bearing prophet. But let not this important fact be forgotten that in spite of my being called a prophet and an apostle God has informed me that I have not been the recipient of all these spiritual blessings and favours independently

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and without the mediation of anybody. No; there dwells on heaven a holy being (the Holy Prophet Muhammad) through whose spiritual patronage all this Grace of God has descended on me. It is through his mediation and after having completely merged my whole being into that of the Great Prophet and after having been known as Muhammad and Ahmad that I am a *rasul* (apostle) and a *nabi* (prophet), that is to say, I have only been sent with a mission and have been endowed with the knowledge of the Unseen. And in this way my claim to prophethood does in no way interfere with the inviolability of the Holy Prophet's status as *Khatamannabiyyin* (Seal of the Prophets), because I have been able to acquire this name by only reflecting in my person all the excellences of the Great Prophet and by annihilating myself in his consuming love. If anybody takes an exception to my being called a *nabi* (prophet) and a *rasul* (apostle) in my revelations, he is but a fool, because my prophethood and apostleship do not infringe the dignity of the Holy Prophet as *Khatamannabiyyin* (Seal of the Prophets).* It is quite clear that when I say that God has called me *nabi* and *rasul* and my opponents entertain the belief that Jesus Christ would come after the Holy Prophet and would be a prophet, the objection that with the advent of a prophet after the Holy Prophet his status as Seal of the prophets is infringed equally applies to the second coming of Jesus Christ as to mine. But my contention is that there is nothing objectionable in my being called *nabi* and *rasul* after the Holy

* How interesting it is that in this way while on the one hand the Holy Prophet's status as *Khatamannabiyyin* (Seal of the prophets) remained intact, on the other the entire *Ummat* of the Holy Prophet did not remain deprived of that kind of prophethood which is implicit in the Quranic verse لا يظهر على غيبه احداً (He does not reveal the secrets of the Unknown except to him whom He chooses as His Apostle 72 : 25). But the prestige of Islam suffers a grievous blow and the verse (33 : 40) of the Quran is proved false if we believe that Jesus Christ who lived some 600 years before the Holy Prophet and had acquired prophethood independently of him will come back to this world and will live and work as a full-fledged prophet of God. By holding such a belief we know we shall have to hear much abuse from our opponents; so let them abuse us as much they can but "presently the unjust will know to what final place of turning they shall turn back" (26 : 228).

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Prophet who was *Khatamannabiyyin* (Seal of the prophets) in the true and full sense of the word nor does this fact in any conceivable manner interfere with his status as *Khatamannabiyyin*.

Time and again I have said that according to the Quranic verse و آخرين منهم لما يلحقوا بهم (And others from among them who have not yet joined them 52 : 3), I am the image of the *Khatamannabiyyin* and his *alter-ego*. And twenty years ago as published in the *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* God called me Muhammad and Ahmad and declared my advent to be the Holy Prophet's own Coming. Thus my prophethood in no way clashes with that of the Holy Prophet because the shadow is inseparable from the original and because in an allegorical sense I am the same Muhammad. So it is in this way that the Seal of *Khatamannabiyyin* remained intact and the Holy Prophet continued to be in the full and exclusive possession of his prophethood, that is to say when I am a complete reflex of the Holy Prophet and his counter-type and have reflected in my person all his excellences and attributes, it is not correct to say that another and a separate person has laid claim to prophethood independently of him.

If you reject me, then you reject the traditions of the Holy Prophet which say that the Promised Mahdi will bear a strong physical and spiritual resemblance to his Great Master so much so that he will even be known by the names by which the Holy Prophet was known—he will be called Muhammad and Ahmad —and will be a member of his household.* This

* It has been proved historically that one of my great-grand mothers was by descent a Sayyad, *i.e.*, a descendant of Fatima, the Holy Prophet's daughter. This historical fact has been corroborated by the Holy Prophet himself and he gave me the name of *Salman* (سلمان) in a dream when addressing me he said:

سلمان منا اهل البيت على مشرب الحسن

and the word *Salman* means two *Salam* and *Salam* means peace, that is to say, it was decreed that I would be the cause and instrument of bringing about two peaces, one internal by which intestine hatreds and recriminations among the Muslims shall be removed and the other external by which all external animosities shall be crushed to death and large numbers of non-Muslims shall be drawn towards Islam by witnessing its greatness

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hadith embodies a beautiful hint that the Promised Mahdi will form spiritually a part and parcel of the Holy Prophet and will be his manifestation.

This contention of mine finds a further countenance in the fact that the words which the Holy Prophet employed to signify his intimate relation and strong resemblance with the Promised Mahdi – he called the latter by his own name—clearly show that the Holy Prophet regarded the Promised Reformer as his counter-type as Yashua was Moses' counter-type and it is not necessary that the couter-type should have a blood relationship with the person whose reflex he is, *i.e.*, he should be his son or grandson, though as far as spiritual relationship is concerned it constitutes an essential condition that he should be a part and parcel of the person whose image and reflection he is and there should subsist an eternal mutual and reciprocal connection between the two. It is highly derogatory to the Holy Prophet that he should have ignored that aspect of the connection with his counter-type which makes clear the sense and significance of the term *barooz* (counter-type) and should have started stressing the fact that he (the Prophet's counter-type) would be his son or grandson. What connection, on earth, there is between being the grandson of a person and his counter-type. If at all it is essential for the spiritual counter-type of a person that he should have some blood relationship with him, then why did the Holy Prophet prefer to choose a remote relationship of a grandson ; the son should have been the natural choice. But the Word of God has completely eliminated the possibility of the Holy Prophet being the father of any person in the physical sense of the word but on the other hand the prophecy of the

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and excellences. It appears that the word *Salman* (سلمان) occurring in the above *hadith* refers to me because the prophecy embodied in it that Salman would bring about two peaces does not apply to that Salman who was a Companion of the Holy Prophet because he did do no such thing. I declare it on the basis of the divine revelation that I am Persian by descent and according to the above *hadith* which is recorded in *Kanzul 'Amāl* (a collection of the sayings of the Holy Prophet) the Persians are Israelites and descendants of Fatima and in a vision I saw that I was holding my head on her thigh which meant that I was the flesh of her flesh and the bone of her bones.

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advent of a counter-type has been recorded in the Islamic literature. If there was to be no counter-type of the Holy Prophet, then how could the disciples of this Promised One be called the Companions of the Holy Prophet as has been done in the verse و آخرين منهم of the Quran? And if you reject the possibility of the advent of a counter-type, you belie this verse of the Quran. Those who are capable only of interpreting a statement literally and always remain obsessed with the physical aspect of a question have sometime declared the Promised One to be a descendant of Hasan, sometime that of Husain, and again at another time that of Abbas. But what the Holy Prophet meant by the above prophecy was only this that he (the Promised One) would like his sons be his heir. He would inherit his name, his attributes his excellences and his knowledge and would inherit also his spiritual eminence. He would, in short reflect in his person all the aspects of the Holy Prophet's supreme personality. He will possess all these excellences not from himself but would acknowledge them as being borrowed from the Holy Prophet and by completely annihilating his being into that of his Master, would reveal the latter's beautiful face to the world. Thus just as being the counter-type of the Holy Prophet he would inherit his name, his spiritual attributes and knowledge, so will he inherit his title of prophethood. It is because even a counter-part is not complete if he does not possess every excellence and perfection of his prototype, and because prophethood is an attribute of a prophet, it is necessary the counter-part should also possess this attribute of his prototype. All the prophets have agreed on the point that a counter-part is a complete image of his prototype so much so that the former comes to be known even by the name of the latter. So it is quite evident that just as in a metaphorical sense, the use of the names Muhammad and Ahmad by a spiritual heir does not imply two Muhammads and two Ahmads, similarly the claim to prophethood on the part of the counter-part can in no wise violate the

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sanctity of the Seal of the *Khatamannabiyyin*, because the counter-part cannot be regarded as distinct and separate from the prototype. In this way the prophethood of the Holy Prophet remained with the Holy Prophet. All prophets hold the belief that the relationship between a prototype and his counter-type eliminates all traces of separateness between the two. The status of a *barooz* (counter-type) is very well described in the couplet:

من تو شدم تو من شدی من تن شدم تو جان شدی
تا کس نگوید بعد ازیں من دیگرم تو دیگری

"I have become thee and thou hast become me. I have become body and thou hast become soul. We have become so completely united that no one can say after this that I am different and separate from thee."

But if Jesus Christ were to come back to this world, he could not do so without infringing the dignity of the Holy Prophet as *Khatamannabiyyin*. In short, the phrase *Khatamannabiyyin* is a divine seal stamped on the prophethood of the Holy Prophet and it is impossible that it should ever break. But it is quite possible that the Holy Prophet may come back to this world not once or twice but hundreds of times in the form of a person who may reflecting in him all the Holy Prophet's attributes become his image or counter-part and while demonstrating the Prophet's other qualities may also demonstrate in his person his attribute of prophethood also. This state of being the Holy Prophet's counter-part was a divinely-given rank, as is apparent from the verse وآخرين منهم لما يلحقوا بهم (And others from among them who have not yet joined them 62 : 3). The prophets are never jealous of their counter-parts, because the latter are their image and bear their stamp and mark. But they are naturally jealous of others. On the night of the Ascession when Moses saw the Holy Prophet getting ahead of him, he gave vent to the agony of his soul and his feeling of jealousy by crying profusely. So when God Himself should say to the Holy Prophet

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that no prophet would come after him and then contradicting His promise should send Jesus Christ, how much would this fact be a source of deep mortification for the Holy Prophet. In short, the prophethood of a counter-part of the Holy Prophet does, in no manner, conflict with or detract from the prophethood of the Holy Prophet nor does it interfere with the dignity of the Holy Prophet as *Khatamannabiyyin* (Seal of the prophets). But the advent of a prophet who got his prophethood independently of the Holy Prophet undermines the very foundation of Islam. It amounts to a disgrace of the Holy Prophet that not he but Jesus Christ should accomplish the great task of annihilating the anti-Christ and this fact also implies a falsification of the verse :

ولكن رسول الله و خاتم النبيين

(*i.e.*, but he is an Apostle of God and the Seal of the prophets 33 : 40). And there lies concealed in this verse a prophecy to the effect that a seal has been set on prophethood to the end of time and with the exception of a counter-part of the Holy Prophet who has no separate spiritual existence from the Holy Prophet nobody would be endowed with the secrets of the Unknown like God's prophets. And as I am that Promised One who was destined to be the Holy Prophet's complete image and his *alter-ego*, therefore to me has been vouchsafed that prophethood which only a *barooz* (counter-part) of the Holy Prophet can get. Now the whole world is powerless in face of this prophethood. A real counter-part of the Holy Prophet reflecting in his person all the perfections and excellences of the Holy Prophet was destined to appear in the Latter Days and he has appeared and now there remains no window open to drink deep at the fountain of prophethood except through him. In short, such a prophethood does not break the Seal of *Khatmiyyat*.* But the advent of Jesus Christ not only constitutes a denial of the verse ولكن رسول الله و خاتم النبيين but also causes

*An Arabic word meaning the status of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the Seal of all the prophets.

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a breach of this Seal and this manifestly unfounded and absurd doctrine finds no support from the Holy Quran, and how could this be possible when such a belief runs counter to the above-mentioned Quranic verse. But the coming of a prophet who believes to have derived his prophethood from the Holy Prophet is supported and substantiated by the Holy Quran and the verse و آخرين منهم bears a testimony to it. This verse contains also a beautiful hint which is this that it makes a mention of the followers of the Promised Messiah while it omits a clear and overt reference to him (the Promised Messiah) through whom his disciples were included among the Companions of the Holy Prophet and were considered to have received their spiritual training from him (the Holy Prophet). This is to show that the Promised Messiah possessed no spiritual existence independent of the Holy Prophet and his borrowed prophethoodand apostleship did not do any violence to the Holy Prophet's status as *Khatamannabiyyin*. This is why he needed no separate mention and this verse has treated him as a negative entity and confined itself to a mention only of the Holy Prophet. Similarly the verse انا اعطيناك الكوثر (*i.e.*, Surely We have given thee abundance of good (108 : 1) embodies a prophecy about the appearance of one who will be the Holy Prophet's counter-type and his reflex and in whose time *Kausar* (abundance of good) will be manifested, that is to say, the fountains of spiritual blessings will begin to flow and people will accept Islam in large numbers in his time. Even in this verse a mention of any physical descendant has been contemptuously omitted and a prophecy about the Holy Prophet's spiritual progeny only has been made. And although God has bestowed this distinction upon me that both the Israelite and Fatimite bloods flow in my veins, yet I give precedence to the spiritual aspect of my connection with the Holy Prophet. My spiritual relation with him is that of a counter-type with his proto-type. Now I have written all this to show that my ill-inclined ignorant opponents accuse me of having laid claim to an independent prophethood and apostleship.

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I have made no such claim, nor do I claim to be a prophet or an apostle in the sense in which they use these words. But I am a prophet and an apostle of God in that sense of these terms which I have explained above. Thus he who out of ill-will accuses me of having laid claim to such prophethood is a liar and a mischief-maker. I am a prophet and an apostle of God because I am an image of the Holy Prophet and his counterpart and it is on this basis that God has called me a prophet and an apostle again and again. My own self comes in nowhere. The Holy Prophet has permeated and pervaded my whole being. This is why I have been called Muhammad and Ahmad. So the Holy Prophet's prophethood and apostleship remained with himself and did not go to anybody else.

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SOME INTERESTING CASES OF HERMAPHRODITISM

The following few instances of hermaphroditism have been selected from a very big book covering about two thousand closely printed pages entitled, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*, which is an encyclopædic collection of rare and extraordinary cases, and of the most striking instances of abnormality in all branches of medicine and surgery, derived from an exhaustive research of medical literature from its origin to the present day, abstracted, classified, annotated, and indexed by George M. Gould, A.M., M.D., and Walter L. Pyle, A.M., M.D., and published by W. B. Saunders and Company, London.

We have collected these few instances from the above book because some of them have at least some bearing on an important religious question—the birth of Jesus Christ without the agency of an human father.—*Ed.*

Some writers claim that Adam was the first hermaphrodite.

—FROM THE ABOVE BOOK.

PARE speaks of a woman who, besides a vulva, from which she menstruated, had a penis, but without prepuce or signs of erectility.

De Graff and Riolan describe similar cases. The authenticated case of Catherine or Charles Hoffman in Germany is on record. She was born in 1824, and was considered a female until the age of forty. At puberty she had the instincts of a woman, and cohabitated with a male lover for twenty years. Her breasts were well formed and she menstruated at nineteen. At the age of forty-six her sexual desires changed, and she attempted coitus as a man, with such evident satisfaction that she married a woman soon afterward.

Fitch speaks of a house-servant with masculine features and movements, aged 28, and 5 feet and 9 inches tall, who was arrested by the police for violating the laws governing prostitution. On examination, well-developed male and female organs of generation were found. The labia majora were normal and flattened on the anterior surface. The labia minora and hymen were absent. The vagina was spacious and the woman had a profuse leukorrhea. She stated

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that several years previously she gave birth to a normal child. In place of a clitoris she had a penis which in erection, measured $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches long and $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches in circumference. The glans penis and the urethra were perfectly formed. The scrotum contained two testicles, each about an inch long; the mons veneris was sparsely covered with straight, black hair. She claimed functional ability with both sets of genitalia, and said she experienced equal sexual gratification with either. Semen issued from the penis, and every three weeks she had scanty menstruation, which lasted but two days.

On August 20, 1864, a person came into the Hotel-Dieu, asking treatment for chronic pleurisy. He said his age was 65, and he pursued the calling of a mountebank, but remarked that in early life he had been taken for a woman. He had menstruated at 8 and had been examined by doctors at 16. The menstruation continued until 1848, and at its cessation he experienced the feelings of a male. At this time he presented the venerable appearance of a long-bearded old man. At the autopsy, about two months later, all the essentials of a female were delineated. A Fallopian tube, ovaries, uterus, and round ligaments were found, and a drawing in cross-section of the parts was made. There is no doubt but that this individual was Marie-Madeline Lefort in age.

Warbe speaks of a person who was supposed to be feminine for twenty-two years. At the age of sixteen she loved a farmer's son, but the union was delayed for some reason, and three years later her grace faded and she became masculine in her looks and tastes. It was only after lengthy discussion, in which the court took part, that it was definitely settled that this person was male.

Adelaide Preville, who was married as a female, and as such lived the last ten years of her life in France, was found on dissection at the Hotel-Dieu to be a man.

Fournier speaks of an individual in Lisbon in 1807 who was in the highest degree of perfection,

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both male and female. The figure was graceful, the voice feminine, the mammae well developed, and menstruation was regular. The female genitalia were normal except the labia majora, which were rather diminutive. The thighs and the pelvis were not so wide as those of a woman. There was some beard on the chin, but it was worn close. The male genitalia were of the size and appearance of a male adult and were covered with usual hair. This person had been twice pregnant and aborted at the third and fifth month. During the coitus the penis became erect, etc.

Virchow in 1872, Boddaert in 1875, and Marchant in 1883 report cases of duplication of the genitalia, and call their cases true hermaphrodites from an anatomic standpoint. There is a specimen in St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London of a man of 44, who died of cerebral hemorrhage. He was well formed and had a beard and full sized penis. He was married and it was stated that his wife had two children. The bladder and the internal organs of generation were those of a man in whom neither testis had descended into the scrotum, and in whom the uterus masculinus and vagina were developed to an unusual degree. The uterus, nearly as large as in the adult female, lay between the bladder and rectum, and was enclosed between two layers of peritoneum, to which, on either side of the uterus, was attached the testes.

There is a type of hermaphroditism in which the sex cannot be definitely declared, and sometimes dissection does not definitely indicate the predominating sex. Such cases are classed under the head of ***neuter hermaphrodites***, possibly an analogy of the "genus epicoenum" of Quintilian. Marie Dorothee, at the age of 23, was examined and declared a girl by Hufeland and Mursina, while Stark, Raschig, and Martens maintained that she was a boy. This formidable array of talent on both sides provoked much discussion in contemporary publications, and the case attracted much notice. Marc saw her in 1803, at which time she carried contradicting certificates as to her sex. He found an imperfect penis, and on the inferior face near the root an opening for

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the passage of urine. No traces of nymphæ, vagina, testicles, nor beard were seen. The stature was small, the form debilitated, and the voice effeminate. Marc came to the conclusion that it was impossible for any man to determine either one sex or the other.

There is a peculiar case on record in which the question of legal male inheritance was not settled until the individual had lived as a female for fifty one years. This person was married when 21, but finding coitus impossible, separated after ten years, and though dressing as a female had coitus with other women. She finally lived with her brother, with whom she eventually came to blows. She prosecuted him for assault, and the brother in return charged her with seducing his wife. Examination ensued, and at this ripe age she was declared to be a male.

The literature on hermaphroditism is so extensive that it is impossible to select a proper representation of interesting cases in this limited space, and the reader is referred to the modern French works on this subject, in which the material is exhaustive and the discussion thoroughly scientific.

Gilbert gives an account of a case of pregnancy in an unmarried woman, who successfully resisted an attempt at criminal connection and yet became impregnated and gave birth to a perfectly formed female child. The hymen was not ruptured and the impregnation could not have preceded the birth more than 36 weeks. There have been reported cases of women being impregnated in a bath, from contact with clothes containing semen, etc., and some authorities in medical jurisprudence have accepted the possibility of such an occurrence. **There is a record of a case of a young girl of great moral purity who became pregnant without the slightest knowledge of the source.** Cases of conception without the slightest sexual desire or pleasure, either from fright, as in rape, or naturally deficient constitution, have been recorded.

L. G. Capers of Vicksburg relates an incident during the American Civil War as follows: A matron and her two daughters, aged fifteen and seventeen years, filled with the enthusiasm of patriotism, stood

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ready to minister to the wounds of their countrymen in their fine residence near the scene of the battle of R—, May 12, 1863, between a portion of Grant's army and some confederates. During the fray a gallant and noble young friend of the narrator staggered and fell to the earth; at the same time a piercing cry was heard in the house near by. Examination of the wounded soldier showed that a bullet had passed through the scrotum and carried away the left testicle. The same bullet had apparently penetrated the left side of the abdomen of the elder young lady, midway between the umbilicus and the anterior superior spinous process of the ilium, and had become lost in the abdomen. This daughter suffered an attack of peritonitis, but recovered in two months under the treatment administered. Marvellous to relate, just 278 days after the reception of the minie-ball, she was delivered of a fine baby, weighing 8 pounds, to the surprise of herself and the mortification of her parents and friends. The hymen was intact, and the young mother strenuously insisted on her virginity and innocence. About three weeks after this remarkable birth Dr. Capers was called to see the infant, and the grandmother insisted that there was something wrong with the child's genitals. Examination showed a rough, swollen, and sensitive scrotum, containing some hard substance. He operated, and extracted a smashed and battered minie-ball. The Doctor, after some meditation, theorized in this manner: He concluded that this was the same ball that had carried away the testicle of his young friend, that had penetrated the ovary of the young lady, and with some spermatozoa upon it had impregnated her. With this conviction he approached the young man and told him the circumstances; the soldier appeared sceptical at first, but consented to visit the young mother, a friendship ensued which soon ripened into a happy marriage, and the pair had three children, none resembling in the same degree as the first, the heroic *pater familias*.

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THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHIC KNOWLEDGE

A Dialogue

[By Mr. Abdus Salam]

Early one morning, as I looked out of my window, I saw Razi walking in the garden of his house with all the signs of a man buried in deep thought. Seeing him thus absorbed in his meditation I went down to him and the following dialogue took place.

"Razi," said I, "I always try to understand what makes you leave your warm bed at such an early hour and expose yourself to the cold of this chilly winter morn when all the world is in by the chimney corner."

"Is it so" said Razi, "but the trouble is that the problem why should we go on living as we are when there are prospects of a better system has kept me waking the whole night and still it has eluded and baffled all solution."

I:—I cannot understand, Razi, why should you be always talking of better systems. You seem to have missed God's great gift of contentment.

Razi:—Maybe. But the wise say, it is better to be an uncontended philosopher, than a contented pig.

I:—Hang philosophy. My friend! you have to live somehow in the world; and the only way is to make the best of the opportunities that come our way and just eat, drink and be merry. Pray don't bother yourself about unreal things and imaginary problems. And let's go up and sit by the fire-side.

Razi:—Alas Roomi, man does not live by bread alone. You talk of earning and spending, the animals also prey for their food, live on and then die. But is this

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life? There is a great difference between the two sorts of lives. The animals live according to the law which governs their life, while you and I have to construct life, according to an ideal, a purpose and a plan. Your life is essentially teleological, while animal life is largely mechanical.

I:—Granted Razi that you have brains enough to theorise about everything, but pray where is the need of that cursed subject—Philosophy, when you have the great resources of modern science at your disposal to draw your water and cook your food. And if you are so constituted to think of the ultimates as your hobby, religion is there to satisfy you, otherwise go to nature and you have so many 'isms' and 'ologies'—to study plants, trees, stones, etc., (while we were so engaged in our discussion, Faizi and Rushdi joined us).

RAZI:—Now gentlemen! we are discussing the problem whether philosophy should have any place in the modern scheme of things, or it should be crowded out of existence, merely because the ground is too full with the technics.

RUSHDI:—Good God!

RAZI:—No we must remember that every science studies a particular section of life from its own special point of view; Botany deals with plants and their growth, Physiology studies organic life, Zoology is the science of animal life, Geography examines physical formation and so on. No science deals with reality in its entirety, taking all these aspects of life together except Philosophy. That is why, Taylor says, "to be a philosopher means to possess encyclopædic knowledge." But because it is impossible, the suggestion comes, take anyone of these branches, study it thoroughly and then approach life from that viewpoint. Of course prejudice may be frequent, but a true philosopher bids good-bye to prejudice the moment he enters this realm.

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FAIZI :—But you said that philosophy takes entire reality into account, we have also religion, which is more definite and universal in compassing the whole life than philosophy. And if you pass to the next stage, mysticism is really the embracing of reality, a participation in the Ultimate Reality—then pray how you justify and explain your philosophy ?

I :—Well-done Faizi !

RUSHDI :—And now the philosopher must come to grief. (At this moment, Razi left us standing silent, as if in deep meditation, while we took two or three turns in the garden, and again he joined us.)

RAZI : – Ah ! It is quite clear, gentlemen, absolutely clear. Religion you must understand is a moral approach to Reality. It gives you certain rules and regulations for refining your conduct, and provides the necessary urge for that object. But philosophy does no such thing. It is purely intellectualistic. You can't make it definite, because it is infinitely indefinite. You can classify religion, but you can't classify philosophy. Then pray which is more universal ? Classification, however, is not a disadvantage to religion. Religion has been fulfilling its great purpose of the spiritual identification of the self with the divine. And here comes mysticism. Mysticism is a development of religious consciousness. It is a feeling of identity with the Real, when the divine becomes human and human divine. But take note of it, please, philosophy is not likewise obscure, whimsical or confused. Its aim only is intellectual satisfaction with the help of the scientific methods of analysis and synthesis. Its value consists in making mind impartial, sound, clear and critical. It is like a tank where a duck and a buffalo can swim alike. It adores nothing and abhors nothing.

FAIZI :—By the way, do you believe in God ?

RAZI :—More strongly than you. To you God is perhaps a Gigantic Soul Who created the heaven

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and the earth and all men. Hence you are in duty-bound to go to Him five times a day more as a mark of respect than as a token of love. That is why you forget God in your wordly affairs. To me God is not merely the Central Soul around Whom the Universe rotates like a lover round a beloved (Plato) but the Ultimate Cosmic Principle which embodies the whole universe like a seed which embodies the flower (Aristotle). You sometimes begin to prove the existence of God by your arguments, (all of them except a few have been recently exploded by Kant) as if God is the result of your arguments. To me God is not a conclusion but an *a-priori* truth which exists before I was born, and He comes to me through intuition, and to you He is an inference, a mathematical certainty not an inner exactitude. A true philosopher would be a true believer in God; but friends! numbers change and religions decay, but philosophy is always on the rise, because it is based upon inquisitiveness and sincerity.

I:—Silent, Razi! do you mean to say that we should leave our religions and be lost in your indefiniteness and insanity.

RAZI:—Don't be so hasty, my friend. Philosophy would be the true religion, "if it has to make men happy and contented." The truth is that it has its own drawbacks. If religion decays on account of the corruption of its own votaries, philosophy suffers from an inattention showed to it. We must understand that it is not an isolated subject at all, though it gives you the capacity of cultivating impartial views. You have only to judge the validity of a particular belief, so far as it is rationally analysable, and philosophy would voluntarily withdraw itself, when on a sound rational data any item is introduced not guaranteed by observation and experiment, *e.g.*, I believe in God, fully satisfied intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Now if God says, a day will come when the dead will be raised, I need not deny it, for the simple reason that the off-shoots of truth will be truth, that is why,

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the predominant part of faith is based on the invisible, for that is ultimately more conducive to moral welfare.

FAIZI :—All this must be true. The Philosophy of Religion would be the rational justification of religion.

RAZI :—That may be the case but then every article of faith may not be philosophically guaranteed. A philosopher can't believe that 80 elephants of the enemy were brushed off by a mere stroke of Arjuna's sword. In the present day, when there is too much of religious mythology and sectarian propaganda on behalf of every religion, I think philosophy shall be doing a good service to the truth-seekers, by giving them a balance where they can weigh and estimate truth.

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THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF ISLAM

[By M. N. Roy]

THE apparently sudden rise and the dramatic expansion of Muhammadanism constitute a most fascinating chapter in the history of mankind. A dispassionate study of this chapter is of great importance in the present fateful period of the history of India. The scientific value of the study by itself is great, and the meritorious quest for knowledge is sure to be handsomely rewarded. But with us, to-day in India, particularly with the Hindus, a proper understanding of the historical role of Islam and the contribution it has made to human culture has acquired a supreme political importance.

This country has become the home of a very considerable number of the followers of the Arabian Prophet. One seldom realises that many more Muhammadans live in India than in any single purely Islamic country. Still, after the lapse of many centuries, this numerous section of the Indian population is generally considered to be an extraneous element. This curious but extremely regrettable cleft in the loose national structure of India has its historical cause. The Muhammadans originally came to India as invaders. They conquered the country and became its rulers for several hundred years. That relation of the conquerer and the subjugated has left its mark on the history of our nation which to-day embraces the both. But the unpleasant memory of the past relations has been progressively eclipsed by the present companionship in slavery. The effect of British Imperialism is no less painful and ruinous for the bulk of the Muslim population than for the masses professing Hinduism. So completely have the Muhammadans become an integral part of the Indian nation that the annals of the Muslim rule are justly recorded as chapters of the history of

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India. Indeed, Nationalism has gone farther in effacing the painful memory of the past.

The practice of seeking consolation for the shame of the present in the real or legendary glory of the past has dressed the Muslim rulers of India in brilliant national colours.

Yet, a Hindu, who prides in the prosperity of the reign of an Akbar or boasts of the architectural accomplishments of a Shahjehan, is even to-day separated most curiously by an unbridgeable gulf from his next door neighbour belonging to the race, or professing the faith, of those illustrious monarchs who are believed to have glorified the History of India. For the orthodox Hindus who constitute the great majority of the Indian population, the Musalman, even of a noble birth or high education or admirable cultural attainments is a *mleechha* impure barbarian who does not deserve a social treatment any better than accorded to the lowest of the Hindus.

The cause of this singular situation is to be traced in the prejudice born, in the past, of the hatred a conquered and oppressed people naturally entertained for the foreign invader. The political relation out of which it sprang is a thing of the past. But the prejudice still persists not only as an effective obstacle to national cohesion, but also as a hindrance for a dispassionate view of history. Indeed, there is no other example of two communities living together in the same country for so many hundred years, and yet having so little appreciation of each other's culture. No civilized people in the world is so ignorant of Islamic history and contemptuous of the Muhammadan religion as the Hindus. Spiritual imperialism is the outstanding feature of our nationalist ideology; But this nasty spirit is the most pronounced in relation to Muhammadanism. The current nation of the teachings of the Arabian Prophet is extremely ill-informed. The average educated Hindu has little knowledge of, and no apprecia-

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tion for the immense revolutionary significance of Islam, and the great cultural consequences of that revolution. The prevailing notions could be laughed at as ridiculous, were they not so pregnant with harmful consequences. These notions should be combatted for the sake of the national cohesion of the Indian people as well as in the interest of science and historical truth. A proper appreciation of the cultural significance of Islam is of supreme importance in this crucial period of the Indian history.

The great historian Gibbon describes the rise and expansion of Islam as " one of the most memorable revolutions which has impressed new and lasting character on the nations of the globe ". One is simply amazed to contemplate the incredible rapidity with which the two mightiest empires of the ancient times were subverted by the comparatively small bands of nomads issuing from the Arabian desert, fired with the zeal of a new faith. Hardly fifty years had passed since Mohammad assumed the role of the singular Prophet spreading his Message of Peace at the point of the sword, his followers victoriously planted the banner of Islam on the confines of India, on the one side, and on the shore of the Atlantic, on the other. The first Khalifas of Damascus reigned over an Empire which could not be crossed in less than five months on the fleetest camel. At the end of the first century of the Hegira, the " Commanders of the Faithful " were the most powerful rulers of the world.

Every prophet establishes his pretension by the performance of miracles. On that token, Mohammad must be recognized as by far the greatest of all prophets, before or after him. The expansion of Islam is the most miraculous of all miracles. The Roman Empire

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of Augustus, as later enlarged by the valiant Trojan, was the result of great and glorious victories, won over a period of seven hundred years. Still, it had not attained the proportions of the Arabian Empire established in less than a century. The Empire of Alexander represented but a fraction of the vast domain of the Khalifas. For nearly a thousand years, the Persian Empire resisted the arms of Rome, only to be subdued by the " Sword of God " in less than a decade. Let a modern historian describe the miracle of the rise of Islam.

" Nowhere was there a vestige of an Arabian state, of a regular army, or of a common political ambition. The Arabs were poets, dreamers, fighters, traders ; they were not politicians. Nor had they found in religion a stabilising or unifying power. They practised a low form of polytheism ...A hundered years later, these obscure savages had achieved for themselves a great world power. They had conquered Syria and Egypt, they had overwhelmed and converted Persia, mastered Western Turkistan and part of the Punjab. They had wrested Africa from the Byzantines and the Berbers, Spain from the Visigoths. In the West they threatened France, in the East Constantinople. Their fleets, built in Alexandria or the Syrian ports, rode the waters of the Mediterranean, pillaged the Greek islands and challenged the naval power of the Byzantine Empire. Their success had been won so easily, the Persians and Berbers of the Atlas Mountains alone offering a serious resistance, that at the beginning of the eighth century it must have seemed an open question whether any final obstacle could be opposed to their victorious course. The Mediterranean had ceased to be a Roman lake. From one end of Europe to the other, the

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Christian states found themselves confronted with the challenge of a new Oriental civilisation founded on a new Oriental faith." (H. A. L. Fisher, A "History of Europe," pp. 137-38).

How did that stupendous miracle happen ? That has been one of the baffling questions for historians. To-day the educated world has rejected the vulgar theory that the rise of Islam was a triumph of fanaticism over sober and tolerant peoples. The phenomenal success of Islam was primarily due to its revolutionary significance and its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of antique civilisation not only of Greece and Rome but of Persia and China and of India. (Introduction to "The Historical Role of Islam)."

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